TEACHING

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EDITORIAL

THE next number of TEACHING will be a special one on Arts in the School.

This will give an opportunity to those teachers who have so far avoided writing for TEACHING because their subjects have not been academic. We hope that experts in the arts will send articles which they feel to be of value to all interested in education.

Some of the aspects of this subject which could be attempted are Singing and Instrumental Music, Dancing, Dramatics, Drawing and Painting, Modelling, Crafts, Development of the artistic sense in children, Decoration in the school and other allied topics.

ENGLISH POETRY IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

A stimulating change to Language study

It seems to be now generally agreed that the aim of English teaching in secondary schools should be to give a working knowledge of the language—and no frills. It is quite possible, the experts tell us, to reach a reasonable standard of proficiency in the reduced time now available for English, but it is absurd to expect the matriculation candidate to appreciate English literature or the finer points of style. Is there then any case for teaching English poetry at all in schools? It is the contention of this article that there is.

Let it first be admitted that the present treatment of poetry, at least in the writer's own state, Madhya Pradesh, is hardly defensible. The textbook for the High School Certificate examination contains fifteen poems, of which perhaps four have any poetic merit. Questions in the examination are on 'explanation' and 'substance'; and, as the study of this book covers the last two years of the high school, the curse of 'explain with reference to the context' lies heavily on the whole of this period. In fact the whole of the poetry teaching has to be based on this approach—treating it as matter for testing comprehension—and for this purpose there can be no doubt that prose would be much better.

Probably this perversion of the teaching of poetry is inevitable so long as it is included as a subject for examination, at least at the school-leaving stage. It is not possible to test appreciation of poetry, any more than it is of music or painting, and any other kind of test on it is irrelevant.

In fact it should not be included in the examination and should not be regarded as part of language teaching at all. The approach should be quite different, aiming at demonstrating, in however simple a way, the pleasure of reading poetry. And I believe that this can be done even with the limited command of the language that can now be expected of secondary school pupils. It is true that a very small number will go on to the study of literature; but the fact that very few of us become musicians is no argument that we should not be helped to the appreciation of music as children. At least some of the children may be given a taste which will serve them in good stead, even if it only means that they will occasionally pick up a book of poetry in after life and look through it. It may be argued that this should be the function of poetry teaching in the mother-tongue; and this of course is true; but surely there is no harm in attempting it in English also. An English schoolboy is not debarred from trying to appreciate French poetry because he also reads Shakespeare.

If, then, poetry is to be taught, what sort of poetry should we offer? It must be admitted that, so long as the emphasis is on comprehension, there are very few English poems that are suitable for an

Indian child. Most lyrical poetry has to be omitted because of references to an unfamiliar background; and indeed many of the present selections intended for India seem to have been so obsessed with this difficulty that they have been content to include verse of no poetic value at all, so long as it can be easily understood. But if the object is enjoyment the case is different. When we read

> That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
> Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,

it does not matter if we have no very clear idea what an elm-tree is like. Of course the poem as a whole should be comprehensible, but the details do not matter. We have therefore a much wider choice.

It is difficult for an adult to know what poetry will appeal to children, and we can probably all remember the profound boredom of being forced at school to study poems we could not appreciate. My own bugbear was Wordsworth's *Daffodils*. Probably at the middle school stage lyrical and contemplative poems are seldom appreciated. Eleven- and twelve-year-olds like a good rollicking narrative such as *Horatius* or *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*; and if it is gruesome, so much the better—*The Bishop of Hatto* and *The Yarn of the Nancy Bell* are very attractive to my eleven-year-old daughter, as is also *Home They Brought the Warrior Dead*, 'because it is sad'. Anything about animals usually appeals to this age too, from Gray's *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog* to T. S. Eliot's cat poems.

At the high school stage it should be possible to introduce many of the great lyrics. If the background is Indian, as with Sarojini Naidu for instance, so much the better, but teen-agers can also appreciate Wordsworth and Shelley. There is nothing very difficult about *The Solitary Reaper* or the Lucy poems. Also, since adolescence is an age of idealism, poems with a clear moral, such as *Abou ben Adhem* or Kipling's *If*, often have a very strong appeal.

But there will always be different tastes. One will like a comic poem, another an emotional one. And that is why we should provide plenty of choice. If instead of grinding through a few poems intensively as at present the children can hear and sample a large range they can pick out what suits them.

There are nowadays excellent anthologies for boys and girls, such as *The Faber Book of Children's Verse*, Walter de la Mare's *Come Hither*, and Cecil Day Lewis's *The Echoing Green*. It is true that these are far too expensive to be prescribed as textbooks. But there is no need for each child to possess a copy, so long as they are available in the class library, or failing that in the school library. The teacher can read from them extensively, and those that are chosen for closer study can be transcribed by the children in their own anthologies—of which more in a moment.

Even better perhaps than these big collections are small selections from an individual poet. They are less intimidating, and the child can

then get the flavour of a particular poet, such as Kipling or Rupert Brooke, and perhaps become interested in him as an individual.

In any case there should be as many poetry books as possible available in the library; and they should be as attractive as possible. Victorian titles such as *A Poesy of Pleasant Delights* are not likely to appeal; nor are tattered and dog-eared volumes.

If the general approach to the poetry lesson suggested above is accepted the exact procedure does not matter very much. The aim will be to arouse pleasure in hearing and reading poetry by sampling as many poems as possible. For this the best way will probably be for the teacher to read to the class two or three times over poems which he chooses. Those which are liked, or which the teacher wants to treat in more detail, can then be written out by the children in a notebook. They can also be encouraged to copy any other poems they like from the books in the library into this notebook, thus gradually building up their own anthologies, a habit which can become a real source of joy, continued long after leaving school.

Explanation should be kept to a minimum. Of course there will have to be some, but in any case the teacher should try to give the atmosphere and background of the poem first, so that explanation of detail will fall into its proper place, and not degenerate into a dreary paraphrase of the poem, line by line. If necessary, difficult bits can be explained in the mother-tongue; and putting a verse into prose order often helps to make the meaning clear.

For some children an elementary idea of metre and rhyme definitely helps. There is an excellent chapter, 'The Instruments of Poetry', in Cecil Day Lewis's stimulating book for boys and girls, *Poetry For You*, which could be used as an introduction to the technical side for those who do find it helpful.

Most children get a real satisfaction from learning by heart, and should be encouraged, but never compelled, to do so. Incidentally it will greatly improve their oral English work. Similarly many like reciting to the class, or reading aloud; but to some it is a torture, and these should never be forced. Those who do not like reciting may nevertheless enjoy writing out what they have learnt by heart.

It will be said no doubt that, where the time for English has been so much cut down, it would be foolish to spend valuable periods on this 'extra'. But in fact one period a fortnight, or even one in three weeks, would be quite enough. It would at least provide a stimulating change to language study. Nor is it necessarily the brighter linguists who will like poetry most; it may appeal just as much to the weaker, and perhaps even provide just the incentive they need. Finally, even if we have to conform to a school-leaving examination which includes the intensive study of a few poems in the old way, we can still keep a broader object in mind and snatch a few periods to treat poetry as a pleasure.

RHONA GHATE

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE TRAINING OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Technique of training must be revised

The Need of Specialized Training

It is seldom realized that teachers of language need special training; it is even less realized that the teacher of any one language needs the same type of teaching aptitude and skill as the teacher of any other language. It is only the knowledge of the language itself which is not transferable. Considerable saving of money, time, effort and equipment could be effected if this were generally accepted. Phoneticians, speech-training and voice-production experts, philologists, experts in audio-visual aids, puppetry and dramatization, language-teaching methodologists and grammarians can all apply their skill and talents to the problems of language and the presentation and stimulation of language in general or to any language they are familiar with. Such experts can hardly all be available in every training college. If they were concentrated in one place so that all language teachers from a wide area, being trained for a particular language, could pass through their hands—if only for short courses of a month or six weeks—there would be a very great improvement in the professional skill and effectiveness of the language teacher. The problem of co-ordinating the multi-lingual educational and cultural life of India would also have been brought a great deal nearer solution. The learning of a language need not be such a formidable process as it all too often is at present, it need not be such a strain on the pupil or the teacher; and success in surmounting the barriers of language could be very much more certain. But for this specialist teachers of language are needed.

Specialization and concentration are needed for mastering and improving techniques in medicine and surgery, engineering and technical processes; yet there is far too often a prejudice against the expert in teaching. But whatever justification this prejudice may have it may be due to nothing more than to the overburdened experts trying to be experts in too much rather than too little. It may also be due to the general prevalence of lecturing on education to large, inattentive and impersonal audiences or to the neglect of other more directly personal and more actively practical modes of discovering and passing on skill in teaching and knowledge of the theory behind it. Besides that, a government education service finds it easier to handle the all-round man and deal out to him, in due season, promotion and favourable transfers. He on his part, knows that promotion is more likely to come his way if he can adapt himself to any post at short notice; so he too tries to avoid entanglement in any work which involves too complete a specialization. Yet, if the doctor welcomes the opportunity to acquire special skill and knowledge and concentrate on a particular kind of work, why should the teacher and the trainer of teachers fear it? With the increase in

psychological knowledge and the multiplication of aids and techniques, we need the expert in the training college and the language-teaching specialist in the school.

Language as a Skill and Language Teaching as a Separate but Related Skill

Language is a skill subject, not a knowledge subject. The knowledge of words is not merely a knowledge of what the words are and mean, but an ability and a skill to apply them effectively, quickly and appropriately in the right situation and the right setting. Just as knowing what a tool is, recognizing it, knowing its name and the mechanical principles involved in its use does not advance us at all in a craft in which the tool is used unless we take it up and use it and practise its use continually, to the point at which we can use it unreflectingly like an extension of a limb. In the same way nothing but significant use of the word and sentence repeated and practised to the point at which we can use it is of any value in acquiring mastery in a language. A skill can only be learnt from a master, by imitation, and by practice under the supervision of a master. But no skill can be practised in theory alone —no skill in carpentry can be learnt and practised on imaginary wood —so the teacher of language must know how to assemble and make use of the raw material of language, life and the situations and actions of real life, in the same way as the teacher of carpentry has to know how to assemble the different kinds of wood, to call forth the effort and the skill of his pupil and give him the necessary experience. So the teacher of language must have not only skill in using the language, but skill in assembling and making the best use of material on which the tool of language is used, life itself, or carefully regulated slices of life. These are the essential skills. Skill in using the voice effectively and in organizing the work of the class, in demonstration and practising the sounds and intonation of the language are important but subsidiary.

First, the teacher must know how to exploit the classroom situation effectively. The classroom situation is not very varied, but it is genuine and immediate. The same situation can be applied to the exercising of many speech forms, just as the same piece of wood can be used to develop a succession of skills in the boy learning carpentry. A boy has a blue shirt—a simple, common situation, like a simple piece of deal wood, hardly worthy of notice—yet it can be used again and again, for example: 'Your shirt is blue', 'His shirt is blue', 'You have a blue shirt', 'He has a blue shirt', 'He is wearing a blue shirt', 'He wears a shirt every day, but today he is wearing a blue shirt', 'Yesterday he was wearing a green shirt', etc. Secondly he must stimulate the imaginations of his pupils to produce slices of life which are otherwise beyond their unaided grasp.

But all this producing and exploiting must be co-ordinated, not only with the course as a whole, but with the rest of the pupils' activities

and school learning and with the whole of his experience. Just knowing facts about teaching will never help the student of teaching to do this. He must be given controlled, supervised and gradual independent experience of applying the tools of language to these varied kinds of material, demonstrating their use and supervising practice with them. Just as every skilled carpenter is not a successful teacher of carpentry, so every skilled user of a language is not a successful teacher of language. The teaching of language is a skill of a special kind that has to be learnt by practice with the tools on the material. But the tools are not blackboard, films, filmstrip, pictures, puppets, sand-table, etc., these are the material—or the setting and manipulators of the material; the tools are words and language.

Various Kinds of Skill Needed

The student, or apprentice, of language teaching is required to master a large variety of skills. He has to be able to speak more clearly and forcefully than the normal user of the language and he needs to train his ear to detect mistakes in pronunciation and intonation, not only from individuals but from individuals speaking in chorus. He then has to be trained in correcting the mistakes and showing pupils how to check one another's pronunciation exercises. Remedial exercises for all manner of weaknesses including muscular awkwardness in the speech organs should be at the disposal of the language teacher. These can only be learnt from a skilled and experienced teacher and through careful practice. Even more than any other teacher the language teacher needs training in voice production and correct breathing.

Success in language teaching depends very largely on facial expression and gesture; the power of dramatization without reflection or rehearsal; drawing on the blackboard; control of the class and the classroom situation; simplification and adaptation of language, the quick improvisation of language in the patterns needed for the lesson, based on the situation; skill in changing the theme of conversation before it becomes stale, yet keeping the essential language patterns continually before the class until they are learnt; keeping the play of statement, command, question and answer continually moving round the class, so as to keep all equally interested, and all equally alert and active; skill in organizing language material, and judgement in portioning it out. All these and many other skills need to be mastered—not to perfection perhaps, but well enough for the teacher to feel confident that he can keep a class effectively occupied—before he leaves the training college. Until he has mastered these skills he can hardly expect to be able to concentrate on the class and the needs of the individual pupils by establishing genuine personal relations with each one of them. None of them can be learnt from a book. He can develop most of them to perfection during his teaching career, but the foundation of all these skills must be laid in the training college if the teacher beginning to teach is to have as much skill as the skill of a surgeon beginning to

operate on living people. The operations of the teacher on the child's mind are just as dangerous to the child and possibly just as far-reaching in their effects for good or evil as the knife of the surgeon on the body.

The language teacher has to be able to communicate enthusiasm to his pupils; but, to do this, he must first catch the enthusiasm from his trainer, and then develop it in the delight of growing mastery in his skill. Language learning is not in itself an interesting or pleasant occupation, unless it is related to life or made alive by someone who has so mastered his technique—so lives in it and breathes it—that there seems to be no technique at all. The untrained teacher, who may know a great deal about many kinds of technique but has not learnt or mastered one, is forced to teach from the textbook. He teaches a dead language that remains between the pages of a book, because he has never learnt how to kindle the imaginations of his pupils with quite simple techniques and trained agility of mind.

The Need for a Practical Training Course

At this point the reader will probably exclaim impatiently, 'This is all very desirable, no doubt, but we have to reckon with the average student when we plan a training course for teachers, not with the gifted student only.' And this is where I should reply: 'Precisely so; hitherto most orthodox courses for the training of teachers have concentrated on giving information in such a form and in such quantity that only the intellectual student has been able to absorb it and then carry it sufficiently near the surface of his consciousness for a long enough time for it to light up his practice and guide him through his failures and disappointments to eventual success.' We teach the grammar of teaching first and then give the practice, as if we were to give lectures on the theory and mechanics of swimming, and encourage pupils to read long descriptions of the various strokes, in books, before letting them get into the water. Even this has been done. The swimming instructor never repeats the experiment, after seeing the discouragement of a pupil who thought he knew so much about swimming, but in the water all his theoretical knowledge is useless. We have learnt not to teach the grammar of a language first, before the pupil has had enough experience in the language to open up his consciousness to it, and we must learn the same lesson in our training of teachers of language. Traditions of how a training course should be built up, and the organization of time and staff that have hitherto served those traditions, stand in the way of the reforms that most of us realize are necessary. The large numbers of students that have to be dealt with in training colleges and the small numbers of expert staff available to deal with them, seem to impose on us inescapably the system of lecturing to a large number of students on the essentials of what they should know and then sending them out to schools in the hope that they may realize some of the theory in practice and stumble on a technique.

Five years after he leaves the training college, if one questions a student about the value of the theoretical subjects he studied there, he will nearly always say that they were of no use to him at all, unless he has had previous experience in teaching. We need not agree with him; he may not be aware of the extent to which his knowledge of the textbook, examples and theories sank into his mind and influenced his practice afterwards; he may not now recognize the ways in which he had been taught to think usefully about his work before he started it. Yet the opinions of so many former training college students ought to warn us not to be complacent. If such opinions become so widespread that a majority of students enter training colleges cynical about the value of the course, expecting nothing but a pair of letters after their names at the end of it, we can hardly expect them to work well. We should consider whether we are preparing their minds suitably for receiving the theoretical material we think they ought to know, or whether we are presenting it in the right form. If a gardener plants seedlings without digging over the ground carefully and digging in compost, or if he puts manure on the beds that that type of plant cannot absorb, the seedlings die, however good the gardener's intentions may have been. Disappointed at what they feel to be the failure of the training college, some experienced educationists, on the other hand, say that teachers are born, not made, and the best way to learn to teach is to teach. Yet why should this be so, if other skills and crafts can be taught? We read in the history of art of many painters and sculptors who outstripped their teachers, but of very few that were not glad to learn the essential skills of their craft from them first. Is it beyond us to work out a practical training that will help the teacher trainee to acquire the essential skills of his craft before he is expected to practice professionally on our children? Is it impracticable to insist that the teacher beginning to teach has at least as much experience and confidence in handling his material as a surgeon performing his first operation?

A Practical Training Course

We hear a good deal about the 33 per cent type of student, the 33 per cent mentality, the 33 per cent attitude, and so on. The training colleges are said to be full of students who have acquired a habit of just scraping through. Doom is prophesied for the teaching profession because the quality of entrants to the training colleges is said to be so low. Yet we know that the most intelligent people are not always the best teachers, and there are many exceptionally intelligent teachers who have never reconciled themselves to spending their lives among immature minds; they either revenge themselves on their surroundings in sarcasm and bitterness or regard their profession as purely a means to support life, and detach themselves from it as much as possible. The examination system selects, but we are none of us quite sure what it selects, unless we say that it selects the people who can do well in examinations. We are accustomed to the idea that it selects the

intelligent. Perhaps it does; but there are other types of excellence in mind and character that are not so well shown by the results of examinations. There is a type of practical intelligence that wilts more and more as the years of academic study follow on one another, which becomes apathetic when the thread of practical reality disappears behind the angle of abstraction and when the inner core of value is hard to see. Many of these people do well in a practical profession where plenty of organizing and leadership is demanded of them. Their minds revive under the stimulus of the practical need for close concentration on an active skill and its theoretical basis. A training for teaching can transform such people, provided they are not kept perpetually waiting for the stimulus of another personality, their lecturer, but are shown how to stimulate and activate themselves and their fellow students.

There is one solution to the over-full college, the over-loaded curriculum and the over-worked lecturer, and that is group work. The trainees should be shown how to work together in groups; how to get the information they need from books, journals, classroom practice and any other sources available, under the guidance of their lecturers; and how to work together in training one another in the practical skills of teaching. It has been shown that in colleges where students are trained to go and look for their own information under the supervision of their lecturers, their personalities develop to a remarkable extent: they become more self-reliant, better able to express themselves and happier in their work. It goes without saying that their work is a great deal more effective. The model high school never seems large enough for the needs of the training college, however large it is; yet one class of 45 boys or girls split up into fifteen groups of three can give teaching practice to 60 students, if they are also split up into groups of four. Each student need not teach more than ten minutes at first. If he spends the other thirty minutes critically watching, or perhaps helping, the other members of the group, he is learning all the time. A conference, at which a spokesman of each group reports on the success achieved, brings the problems concretely before the whole class for discussion under the guidance of the lecturer. To ensure success the teachers in the model high school should be chosen for their experience, and trained to guide students in their practical work. Their status has to be such that they have real responsibility for the work of the students. Teaching a small number of children for ten minutes makes it possible for the student to concentrate on details of presentation, without his being distracted by the further problem of organizing and balancing enough material to fill a whole lesson, and the added skill of controlling a class of 45 or 50 children. Each of these different skills can be added progressively when he is ready for them. Besides the advantage of meeting his difficulties one by one, his opportunity of watching the efforts of the other members of his group and then discussing with them the problems and difficulties in the

lesson, and finally drafting a common report; help him to become fully conscious of what he and the others have been doing. The lecture's short theoretical analysis of the problems, and the psychological and pedagogic lessons he can draw from them, then make a far deeper impression on the mind of the student than any amount of reading.

Above all a co-operative, workshop atmosphere must be created from the start. Students must be shown how they can rehearse one another in the many repetitions of the presentation of language material that are necessary, if they are to achieve skill; how they can practise drawing on the blackboard, making landscapes on a sand-table, making models, puppets and charts according to their abilities. There should be no question of requiring from every student identical, or even similar evidence of practical skill in the preparation of visual aids. If the group is the unit, each member of the group contributes to the group presentation of the topic or to the group teaching of a lesson to a small number or a complete class of children. Clearness of aim need not be asked for; it will be forced on the group by the necessity of four students working as a team.

It is not possible to dwell on the problems of practical training that has to be given if we are to turn our trainees into working craftsmen by the time they leave the training college. Some of the problems connected with this are, what proportion of the present load of theoretical study can be simply jettisoned, what proportion worked into the year of practical training, and what proportion postponed for the first year of work in the school. There is a good deal to be said for making the trainees sit for their examination after a year of work in school. The programme should be light, allowing time for plenty of professional reading, and possibly a one- or two-month period back in the training college with plenty of discussion and some lectures on pedagogy and psychology at the end. So many new items have been added to the curriculum since it was originally planned, that one year is no longer enough, but no extension of time in learning about teaching will have any value until the trainees have learnt how to teach and can relate the theory they learn to their own practical experience.

F. L. BILLOWS

THE JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA

A bold experiment in education

The Jamia a Unique Institution

Okhla, a small village, only eight miles away from Old Delhi, on the banks of the river Jumna, is housing a unique educational institution called the Jamia Millia Islamia (The National Muslim University). Although little about it is known to the general public, its experiments and achievements in the field of education are of considerable significance. An attempt is made in this article to outline its major experiments with special reference to those which have influenced the educational thought and practice of our country.

The Jamia a National University

The Jamia Millia Islamia is as truly national in its origin as it is in its history. It was founded in 1920 by national leaders as a result of Mahatma Gandhi's movement of non-co-operation. It came into existence after a band of Muslim students left the Aligarh University with a view to boycotting western education. In fact it rose as a protest against formalism and dogmatism prevalent in education thirty years ago. It was launched in revolt against the imposition of a foreign educational system on our country.

It was a bold experiment in education, both in spirit and in practice. It was established in order to impart a genuinely national education to those young Indians who wished to prepare themselves for a life devoted to service in free India. Its aim was to make the students national-minded and self-reliant. The fact that the institution was built up predominantly by the sacrifices of Muslim leaders and that the students were predominantly Muslim did in no respect affect its national character.

A national education could never be truly national if it were restricted to certain groups and classes of Indians. However, the Jamia Millia acquired an exclusive character since the children who were drawn to it were mainly Muslim because more emphasis was laid upon Muslim culture and tradition; the medium of instruction being Urdu, with the emphasis on pure Urdu. Hindi is also taught. In spite of this exclusiveness the present set-up of the Jamia Millia Islamia reveals a heterogeneous community. It is open to children and staff of all communities professing faiths and creeds other than Islam. On the rolls are students from Indonesia, Malaya, Tibet and Turkey, thereby enhancing the international outlook of which the Jamia Millia Islamia is so legitimately proud.

The Jamia Adopts an Experimental Approach

The Jamia is a research institute and works in all fields of education, primary, secondary, university and also teachers' training. It has

undertaken to readjust the balance between the primary, secondary and higher stages of education. Its approach, which is true of all progressive education, is dynamic. Since it has accepted the experimental approach, the Jamia boldly refuses to work along the lines of a set programme. Fully aware of the dangers and pitfalls of any traditional approach to education which should conform to the ever-changing needs of a changing life, it has chosen the much harder way by allowing things to work out for themselves.

If one chooses to experiment, any preconceived idea of the outcome is fatal to the success of one's experiment. In order to obtain a comprehensive set of results, conditions have to be changed constantly. Failures are accepted gladly because they often show more clearly what is wrong with the conditions than successes show what is right with them. It is this new spirit which is the main inspiration at work in the Jamia Millia Islamia. To it is due the democratic outlook of teachers, their resourcefulness, their freedom and discipline, their gifts of leadership and initiative, and their all-pervading sense of responsibility. It can be rightly described as an educational laboratory supplying the country with ideas and plans and demonstrating the spirit which must inspire the work of national education.

Primary Education

The Jamia Millia Islamia started with a primary school, as it rightly considered the primary stage to be the foundation of all education. The typically democratic and boldly experimental spirit of the institution determines the nature and scope of the primary school. One of the teachers made it his ambition to organize the programme of the school on the project method. The objective in the running of the primary section is not to have an ideal primary school for about 150 boys, but the main emphasis has been on experimentation in the field of primary education. The experimental work done in the Jamia Millia Islamia became the groundwork of the schemes of Basic National Education formulated by the Dr Zakir Hussain Committee. When in 1937 Mahatma Gandhi propounded his idea of education through work, the staff of the Jamia Millia Islamia were able to grasp his meaning immediately and sympathetically. The primary school now comprises fifty per cent day scholars and fifty per cent boarders, the majority of them belonging to middle-class families. The teaching methods are based on projects which are either permanent or temporary. To the former group belong the school bank, the poultry farm, the stationery and fruit shops and vegetable gardens; to the latter the frequent excursions to places of interest. The salient feature of the primary school is its Student Government which runs the day-to-day government of the school. Once every year the primary school children manage the school without guidance from their teachers. As a visitor, I happened to be there on such an occasion. The children made a deep impression on me by the seriousness of purpose and the usual regularity

with which they managed their school. Even the child Vice-Chancellor lived up to the tradition of hospitality of the Jamia Millia Islamia by entertaining my friends and me to tea with social ease. The open-air session is an annual feature of the primary school. The entire staff and children move out for a fortnight and conduct all the school activities in rural surroundings along non-traditional lines.

Teachers' Training Institute

Vitally connected with and in close collaboration with the primary school is the Teachers' Training Institute which was established in 1938 for teachers of proposed Basic schools. The experiments in the one influence the other. It is now recognized as a model training institute in this country for teachers of Basic schools. Several states send their students for training there. It also holds refresher courses in the philosophy, the practice and the methodology of Basic school education.

Secondary Education

The aim of secondary education in the Jamia Millia Islamia is self-sufficiency. It is self-sufficient and not subservient to the requirements of the university. Those who are contemplating the idea of giving effect to the recommendations of the Secondary Education Committee can very well study the working of the Jamia Millia Islamia programme. The Jamia Millia Islamia through its experience in this particular field offers inspiration as perhaps no other institution can.

The salient feature of the secondary school, which has a four-year course, is that it has been following the diversified course in the arts group, in science and in the crafts groups, with a common core of literary subjects. This was introduced before the Secondary Education Committee made recommendations to that effect. Every student in the secondary school learns his mother-tongue and social sciences; he is also taught general knowledge. With this proviso, opportunity is provided to students to specialize in the various groups such as arts, science or crafts. Before the students are allotted to special groups, their achievements, aptitudes and interests are ascertained, and their family traditions and hobbies are considered. The secondary school has a farm, foundry, carpentry and machine-shops where the children learn agriculture, metal-work, fretwork, carpentry, tailoring and radio-assembling, thus offering ample opportunities for the individual growth and development of various aptitudes and interests. Children who cannot afford to pay their fees earn their way by working in these shops and in the publication house, thus earning while learning.

The secondary school is run on progressive educational lines. The History Club of the school has worked on the Delhi project and has built a school museum; in it are now housed historical, cultural and industrial exhibits in relation to Delhi. There are various other clubs which give impetus to the interests of children and offer opportunities for training in the qualities of leadership among them. The primary

and secondary schools of the Jamia Millia Islamia rank among the best public schools in India, not because of their superior equipment, but because of the spirit which inspires their corporate cultural life, and the development of qualities like leadership and a sense of responsibility among the children.

University Education

The Jamia Millia's arts college has only recently been accorded recognition in the Intermediate and Degree examinations. It educates young men to become social workers, teachers and journalists. The students work in the neighbouring villages and settlements. The emphasis is not merely on theoretical knowledge alone but on practical education as well.

Adult and Social Education Institute

The Jamia Millia Islamia took up adult and social education in 1936-7 and ever since its inception the institute has been running on experimental lines. It has four centres in Delhi giving education to neo-literates through audio-visual aids. The Jamia's staff have evolved a programme for a model social education centre and have prepared literature for these neo-literates. They have prepared some 300 booklets, 150 of which have been printed by the Government of India at government expense and freely distributed to the different states.

At the moment the Adult and Social Education Institute is concentrating its attention on audio-visual methods. The Institute has also a special branch for children, known as *Bachhon ki Biradri* (Children's Brotherhood) which organizes extra-curricular and club activities such as dramas, debates, folk songs and so forth, for children. The total membership of the clubs is approximately 10,000.

Other Departments of the Jamia Millia Islamia

Another feature of the Jamia Millia Islamia is the Maktaba Jamia Ltd (Publication House). It publishes textbooks which have been approved in several states, as well as literary and advanced books on literature and social sciences. The children of the various schools here publish their own newspapers.

There are numerous other notable Institutes for agricultural economics and rural sociology for postgraduate research. The Institute of Arts Education for training art teachers gives vocational training in crafts. The Institute of History and Politics is engaged in archæological research and the preparation of source-books of Indian history, and reading material for high schools and colleges in history and political science. The existence of these Institutes today is due to the democratic outlook of the members of the staff who took the initiative in creating them and subsequently maintaining them with singleness of purpose and devotion. The Jamia Millia Islamia also has a Rural

University which investigates the various aspects of Basic education—its curriculum, techniques of teaching, preparation of literature, evaluation, supervision, administration and allied subjects.

Educational Festival—an Annual Feature

The Jamia Millia Islamia holds an educational festival every year. As a guest last year I had the opportunity of attending it. Although it started for recreational purposes it has now developed into an elaborate educational festival, the only one of its kind in India. This festival reflects the true spirit of adventure of the Jamia Millia Islamia, and the bold experimentation in progressive education. On this occasion the educational and cultural achievements of children and staff are exhibited. It provides opportunities to teachers and pupils for planning and working their educational projects on a co-operative basis. It also gives them opportunities to get their work evaluated by inviting educationists to study it. Other institutions in Delhi also get acquainted with the Jamia's achievements, its educational thought and so on. Symposiums on educational problems are organized on the occasion of the festival. In this way Jamia Millia Islamia also acts as a community centre and provides much entertainment to the surrounding rural population through plays, symposiums and other cultural activities. They have not only easy access to see these plays but are also invited to participate in them and in the other activities as well. The villagers contribute their mite towards the festival by their folk-dances and rural songs in which the students of the Jamia Millia Islamia join.

Thus the Jamia Millia Islamia through its educational festival serves as a potent centre of enlightenment and service to the rural communities of the neighbouring areas. The villagers, farmers, fishermen and the like, hold conferences in which they discuss their practical problems and difficulties. Last year they made proposals in a very outspoken manner to get their grievances redressed in front of the Chief Commissioner of Delhi, who presided over the conference. In this way the Jamia has become a forum of free criticism in an exchange of views and attitudes and so contributes to the development of a democratic spirit among the students and villagers alike. This novel experiment has not only attracted the attention of the local educationists and teachers but also the ambassadors of foreign countries who have attended some of its educational festivals.

The Jamia's Role in New India

Some may ask: What role is the Jamia Millia Islamia playing in free India? Has it outlived its value after having achieved its original mission of reorganizing the educational system on national lines? It can be said without doubt that after independence the question of national education has actively ceased to occupy the minds of our educationists today and that there is no agitation against the imposition

of a foreign pattern of education. How do we now justify the role of the Jamia Millia Islamia in our present national set-up? Jamia Millia Islamia owes its existence, as we have already mentioned, to its bold experimental spirit. Even today it has not ceased critically to evaluate practically every aspect of our national education from the experimental point of view. It has not become complacent after its original achievements. It has carried its revolutionary spirit into our national education. It is as critical of its own educational pattern as it was of the former pattern. Jamia's practice has always been ahead of its theory: this is its greatest achievement. To it we owe many innovations in the educational field.

Apart from the significant educational experiments cited in the preceding pages, Jamia Millia Islamia today is playing a very important part by inculcating in children of the Muslim community in India an awareness that they form a vital part of larger India without losing their own cultural identity. Such a spirit and attitude is shown during its educational festivals which give evidence of the fact that the children, through their plays and other cultural activities, feel that they are Indians first and dedicated to the service of free India. This is one of the remarkable achievements of Jamia Millia Islamia, and on this role, apart from its being an exponent of progressive education, depends its future. Jamia Millia Islamia is democratic both in spirit and in practice, and its contribution towards enhancing this spirit is of great importance in the new India today.

SHAKUNTALA BHALLA

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EXAMINATIONS

Their scope and limitations

WE CANNOT answer the questions of whether we want examinations or not and, if we do want them, what kind of examinations we want, unless we have clear answers to a host of other questions. We will ask far more questions than we can answer, leaving it to the reader to try to answer most of them, which process we hope will help to clarify our views as to what needs to be done about our present system.

In the first place, what is an examination for? What is it supposed to do? The most obvious answer is that it is our means of measuring or evaluating the products of the educational system. Fortunately, or unfortunately, there are by-products as well as initial products which need to be measured. What is being measured? Who wants to know? What are the instruments for measuring and what are the standards? Here we find a confusion and even contradiction of answers.

What are the products which should be measured? Most of these, and the most important, are in the sphere of human development. But some of them are not. The original purpose of the school is to develop the abilities, personalities, and attitudes of young men and women that they may be useful members of society and also that they may lead rich and inwardly satisfactory lives as individuals. To what extent do our examinations measure this, or rather the prospects of the students becoming this? To become a useful member of society one stands in need of a large variety of skills, knowledge, adaptations, and attitudes. Some of these are easier to measure than others. It is quite possible for an examination system to concentrate on knowledge almost exclusively. Sometimes that kind of knowledge is stressed which is not of primary value. No one can deny that the tendency has been just that, and that the educational system as a whole reflects this very weakness. Skills are often of more importance than different kinds of knowledge, for skills show what a person can do whereas knowledge may be quite inert and be learned without any regard as to how it is to be put to use. The adaptability to social, economic, and other life situations as well as attitudes (including goodwill and character) are of first-rate importance but are quite generally neglected by an examination system which either cannot, or does not succeed in measuring them. The obvious inference is that examinations should include as wide a field as possible and recognize their limitations as being only a partial measurement of the desired product. In the light of the limitations of the best examinational system and the discrepancy between the ideal examinational system and the one we happen to be burdened with, it is quite evident that examinations at present enjoy a power over the fates of men and women to which their limited efficiency by no mean entitles them.

The student is the main product of the educational system, but

there are many others as well as by-products which need to be evaluated if we are to know what we are accomplishing for good or evil. Among the other products, we might mention the types of teachers produced by the system in which they work, the system itself, the public attitude towards education, and the value to the economic and social system of the students produced. Among the by-products we might mention the misfits among the students (among both failures and so-called successes), the cheatings, and the violence towards invigilators, the preference for coaching for the examination rather than real teaching and learning, the predilection for genteel jobs instead of productive ones, the distortion of the actual teaching syllabus to meet the needs of what is expected to be most helpful in getting over the hurdle of the examination, the hope for 'luck' in the examination rather than effort to develop ability on the part of the student. The by-products are labelled *by-* not because they are of less importance for good or evil than the products, but because they are not what we originally intended, but intrude themselves against our wishes.

Who does the measuring? Sometimes the teacher, sometimes the school, sometimes the inspecting body, sometimes the State. Unfortunately, weight is attached to them in inverse ratio to their real educational value. The most important of all measuring done is that by the teacher, or rather by the pupil and teacher in co-operation to find out what is being achieved. As a carpenter, or mason, cannot do accurate work without frequent resort to foot-rule, square, level, and plumb-line, so teachers and pupils cannot make good progress without frequently checking to see how they are coming along, to see how the pupils' skills are developing, to see whether they have acquired the essential knowledge, and how effectively they can apply this knowledge. The examination by the school is meant to assist the teacher, and the entire staff concerned, to evaluate in terms of more general standards on a broader comparative level. It is a more formal check on a larger scale of what the teacher tries to do within his class. The examination of the inspecting or supervising bodies has the purpose of checking on the work of the teacher and the school rather than on the work of the individual student. Its purpose should be constructive. Its purpose should be that of helping the teacher rather than that of fault finding. Without the active goodwill and participation of the teacher it has little more value than the teacher- and school-conducted examinations have without intelligent participation of the pupil. The State-conducted examinations, such as primary and high school leaving certificates, diploma, or degree examinations are for an entirely different purpose. They are to say which of the candidates shall be considered successful products of the courses they took, and which shall be considered to be inadequate. To some extent they also try to tell *how* successfully the students succeeded in doing what was expected of them. Therefore, we have the various divisions in which the students passed, the

distinctions, and percentage marks. These have some value, but too much value can be attached to them. In the case of border-line students the diploma means very little. The passing mark is an arbitrary one and those who *just failed* and those who *barely passed* are actually almost as much alike as two peas excepting that one gets tremendous advantages which the other just missed. Unfortunately, you cannot get away from drawing the arbitrary line somewhere although you know that one student who got good marks in everything else but simply cannot get past mathematics is a better man for many jobs than the one who barely passed in all subjects.

Since it is these State examinations which we have mostly in mind when we speak of examinations in India, we need to go into a little more detail. Is a State examination necessary? If schools and teachers cannot be trusted to do this work of passing or failing honestly, the State examination is necessary. If they can be trusted there is still the question of whether the attempt at standardizing the product which takes place in a public examination has more benefits than bad effects. Perhaps it will be desirable in such professions as medicine, engineering, and wherever exact technical skill is needed. Whether it is necessary in non-professional types of education is quite another question, the answer depending partly on the nature of the system. The only necessity for it on the primary and high school level is when teachers and institutions function on a low level of efficiency. Good teaching is not encouraged by an assumption of inefficiency and untrustworthiness, whether justified or not. Mistrust has a tendency to breed untrustworthiness.

What is being measured? Let us confine ourselves to the centrally conducted examination. It is this type of examination which lies at the crux of the problem. How useful, wise, trustworthy, mature, responsible, socially minded, self-reliant, efficient and adaptable has the student become? This is what we really want to know but we hardly expect the examination to assess all these facts. A limited amount of knowledge and skill required by the syllabus will be measured. How useful will those skills and knowledge be? That is one of the moot questions of education today. The answer is not quite the same for students who regard high school education, for instance, as a stepping-stone to higher education and those who cannot hope to go beyond high school. Another pertinent question is whether the knowledge and skills acquired in the limited amount and with the limited efficiency the examination requires for a pass will be useful. Is a 33 per cent or even a 50 per cent, or 60 per cent efficiency satisfactory in real life? Does the traditional certificate examination paper really emphasize those parts of the course which are of the greatest value? If it does, then we must also be able to say that the best grounded student, the one with the broadest and most profound grasp of the subject and greatest efficiency in helpful skills, is the one who will receive the highest marks, and that the teacher who has created

the greatest interest and effort for real understanding and mastery will be rewarded by seeing his students get the best numbers. But the fact is that the students who are coached to memorize rather than understand, who are coached only in that which is likely to appear in the examination, and the teachers who are most clever in anticipating what questions are likely to appear in the examination of the year and to confining their teaching to these, are often the most 'successful'. Our examination system as constituted does not measure the best products of education but, to a deplorable degree, only the superficial and to some extent worthless aspects. The efficiency of the best examination ever devised to measure what it is supposed to measure, will be considerably short of 100 per cent. The question arises whether the efficiency is anywhere near what can reasonably be expected. It is quite generally agreed that sufficient effort is not made to bring the conduct of examinations in this country up to efficient standards and that the progress made in making measurement more scientific in other countries has been talked about a great deal in this country, but is rather generally ignored when it comes to practice. There are some exceptions to this general indictment but the exceptions are too few.

There are many things that can be measured by a good test besides the work of the individual. Or rather, we should put it in this way: Any good test contains the raw data which can be utilized to give information on many aspects of the educational programme besides that of the effort and ability of an individual student. It can give information on the work of the teacher and the work of the institution. Attempts are often made to utilize facts which bear information on this point although severe injustice can be done to both teacher and institution if other facts besides those of 'examination results' are not taken into consideration. A good test can also shed light on the appropriateness of the syllabus for those students who are supposed to study it, and it can reveal the weakness of the examination itself. But little or no regard is paid to these aspects by the organizations responsible for the public examinations. In consequence the syllabus is never scientifically tested for its suitability. The result is that unsuitable parts are continued year after year and false or empty standards become a part of the curriculum and accepted practice. The absence of scientific tests to test examinations is largely responsible for the continuation of the evils of a rigid and dominating system which has narrowed the objectives of teachers, students, and the general public.

Who wants to know how capable a student has become? Why do we strive for certain standards anyway? Of course, the student and his family want to know the results in his examination but that is not what we are now concerned with. Is there a public interest at stake in the maintenance of the standard that the examination system seeks to maintain? There definitely is. Before I entrust myself to a surgeon for a major operation I want to know if he is qualified to do such an

operation. Before I entrust my case to a pleader I want to know if he is able to handle the case. Before I employ a typist and stenographer I want to know how efficient he is. Before the State entrusts the building of a bridge to an engineer it wants to know whether he can build a strong bridge. We hope for a similar guarantee of less specialized qualifications. The British Colonial Office put great stress on the matriculation and bachelor degree certificates because it needed many men in its clerical offices. It hoped and expected that a man with such a certificate was sufficiently versed in language, mathematics, and a few other branches to be quickly adaptable to a clerical post. In this expectation it offered higher salaries to the holders of the high school or college certificate than to those who had failed in high school or college. Only thirty years ago some salary scales for primary school teachers gave one starting pay to teachers who had passed fourth class, another to a man who had passed fifth, and a higher one to the one who passed sixth, and so on, as if the ability to teach were in direct proportion to the number of annual promotional examinations passed. A high school graduate received about double the salary of a high school failure. This had a certain merit in that it did give preference to those who on the whole were the more intelligent or at least had superior intelligence of a certain kind. As long as there were few people of any education at all and high school students were as rare as college students today, and the qualities wanted were mainly those of being able to do the amount of reading, writing and cyphering required in a subservient clerical post, the method of selection had certain merit. But now that there are many high school students and graduates to choose from, and the nature of service required of them involves much more versatility, initiative, and understanding, a mere certificate of a non-specialized type means little. What any prospective employer, or business partner, or branch of service wants to know about an applicant is: How able is he? How adaptable is he? How co-operative is he? How self-reliant is he? How responsible and trustworthy is he? Has he an attractive personality? Has he the right attitude? Will he be a help or a nuisance? Can he put ideas to work? Just how much of this information do our present examinations reveal of the real man or the real woman? That is what counts.

Of course, one cannot expect an academic examination to give the answer to all these questions. That is not what it is meant to do even though it would be wonderful if it could do it. And yet when we speak of 'qualifications' we act as if the supreme qualifications were those revealed by the final examination marks. Under the present system the final and most telling certificate given to a student is not that of a school which has watched his development over a period of years, which knows his adaptability and social adjustments, his originality and initiative, as well as his talent for cramming facts of a bookish nature, but the certificate granted by an examining board which knows

the student by number rather than by name, and knows only what he was able to put down on paper after a misguided preparation in a time of abnormal and emotional strain. The result of considering only the results of the examination is that the school has not learned to care much about the all-around development, but only about the final score announced by the examining board. No records worth the name are kept of the students' actual progress in the qualities that are of just as much, if not considerably more, importance than the ability to repeat second-hand materials printed in the textbook or dictated as notes by the teacher. Thus, the public, which wants to know about the qualities of a student, is given very little indication of what it wants to know about him. The measurement of the abilities is a very one-sided type of measurement which is treated as if it were the most decisive. In the meantime, the school has not been stimulated to develop those qualities which are most needed.

It is necessary to return to the question of salaries. Since salary scales were so closely linked with academic achievement, the tendency has been to look upon certificates largely in terms of cash value. Since a B.A. pass gets twice what a B.A. failure gets, and a high school pass twice what a failure gets, teachers, students and parents are less concerned with the real educational value than with the certificate that brings in the cash, or hope of cash, regardless of the ability and actual usefulness of the student. The importance given to the holding of the certificate is out of all proportion to the accuracy of the measurement of intrinsic ability that an examination of the sort we have in this country is capable of. The question of examinations is mixed with that of cash rewards to such an extent that the strain on students, parents, teachers, the educational system and the examining boards is such as to distort its values and accomplishments. This encourages malpractices of many kinds by students and even teachers.

What are our instruments for measuring, and how efficient are they? There has been a decided improvement in the types of examination given over the period of twenty years, but not nearly enough. The University Education Commission Report states that without radical reform of the examination system, higher education itself in India will fall into chaos. Had the Commission been speaking for secondary education it would no doubt have said the same kind of thing, and the same kind of thing can be said for the traditional primary school system also. It is interesting to note that Basic education places little weight on examinations. This is quite consistent with the change of emphasis in education itself. It stresses the functional side of education, namely doing instead of merely collecting information. For skill and ability in doing things, the proof is the doing itself without further need of written examinations. Observing that the children can do certain things is itself an examination. But the three R's are essential to Basic education also. We still need good testing instruments to measure progress in these and literary and scientific subjects.

The instruments for this testing need to be better than the antiquated ones now in use and they need to be applied with a sounder understanding of what they actually do measure and what their limitations are.

When we call the present type of examinations antiquated, we do not mean that their method and content is obsolete. The ways of asking questions have been greatly increased but the traditional question and answer are still basic to all types whether new or old. Much of the newer type test is simply a restatement and refinement of the old, organized for quicker, more concise, accurate, objective, comprehensive and inclusive measurement.

The mere change of the form of the examination from essay type to new type is not a reform in examinations. It all depends upon what content the examiner succeeds in putting into his questions, to what extent he succeeds in probing the ability of the student to apply his knowledge, to recognize its implications outside a stereotyped memorized form, to see relationships, contradictions, inconsistencies, and implications. Unless the reformed examinations stress the broader and more important side of the educational growth of the student and give encouragement to the teacher to work for fundamental understanding and effective application on the part of the student, they will only be the old system over again in new form. Much has been learned about the art of improved measurement of educational and psychological growth. The newer methods can be made comparatively scientific and much more accurate and comprehensive than the old type, but no graver mistake could be made than to assume that superiority of the new type lies in its novel forms. The superiority, when there is such (there are bad new-type tests as well as old-type ones) lies in the content and greater comprehensiveness. The newer forms are a great aid in faster, better, more objective, and more thorough measurement; but they are only an aid. Unless the examiner has the broader, more effective educational objectives clearly in mind and succeeds in probing these through a medium of expression of a good many short items, he deals with the superficials and not with the fundamentals. Reform of method is essential but also of content and objectives. But even the best of modern tests cannot do everything which the present educational system and the general public naively and blindly expect it to do. The true goals of education are infinitely more than a high mark in a final examination. The domination of the educational system by the examination means the subjection of the whole by what should be and can be only a small although important part of the whole.

Training colleges are teaching the theory and practice of the new-type examination as well as the statistical treatments which are the foundation of their application and use. But as long as examining boards and school administrations are so reluctant to depart from the traditional practices, the newer methods and the conceptions behind them are not taken seriously. The newly trained teachers forget about them before

they are in an authoritative enough position to put them into practice. The state examination serves as the model which teachers inevitably imitate to the exclusion of all else.

The author is not in a position to know how many examining boards have made a serious attempt to use the improved techniques. Madras State has made use of them in a few subjects. The author was privileged to assist in the construction of such tests. But the old conception of standards and passing marks was retained thus making the reform a very partial one. A survey of the types of tests held in all the states together with a summarization of the examination results would prove interesting and valuable. The subject is suggested as a thesis to some student on the M.Ed. or Ph.D. level.

The author was privileged to read a paper on the use of the cumulative record prepared by a Mr Shamshuddin of Raipur. The cumulative record is a recording device by which the progress of all students is recorded over a period of many years. In this the results of various examinations becomes an important part of the success evaluation of the student. His physical development, his social activities and adjustments, and his extra-curricular activities are also noted. This method reveals far more than any examination, including a degree examination, possibly can. It shifts the emphasis from a one-time or once-a-year performance in a few academic subjects to the full development in practically all the important aspects of education and general physical, social, and mental development over a longer period of time. It is this shift of emphasis which is necessary before examination reforms can be at all complete.

The author was recently engaged in conversation with the Director of Industries of one of the large states in the Indian Union. This eminent and capable man had spent several years in study in a certain foreign country. He remarked that what struck him as most unusual in the educational system of that country was the fact that examinations came at the end of every term but were treated as a relatively minor matter in comparison with the week-by-week work of the student. He said that as a consequence he worked all year rather than just during the examination preparation time and therefore got real value out of his courses. Any system which places too strong an emphasis on a single performance at the end of the year, or at the end of a course of several years duration, is bound to detract from the importance of the daily work, which is of far more importance than the skeletal and fragmentary review which takes place shortly before the final examination. Examinations are of great value as stimulators of review but no review is of much real value which has not been preceded by the real foundational work and experience which is more than just a matter of the type of memory work done in preparation for the examination.

We will end with a statement of conclusions and principles:

(1) An examination is an attempt at measurement of educational development. At best it is only a partial measurement of the develop-

ment of the student. At worst it may be more a measurement of the less desirable accomplishments than of the desirable.

(2) The ones who can profit most from the measurement of ability are the student and the teacher. But few examinations are conducted with this purpose in view.

(3) Centrally conducted examinations have some value in maintaining standards for schools and professional service. But they also have many by-products which are undesirable. The by-products are stifling to initiative, originality, and the teaching. The centralized examination should be restricted to the absolutely necessary. The replacement of the primary certificate examination by something better is long overdue. What about the high school leaving certificate?

(4) Wherever the final authority for passing students is in the hands of a central examining board, the sense of responsibility of the school and teacher for anything besides examination results is weakened. The staffs of schools must be trained to take more responsibilities in the evaluation of the final product.

(5) Wherever the end-of-the-year, or end-of-the-course examination determines almost entirely the 'success' of the student, the emphasis is away from the daily work to the only thing which counts.

(6) Techniques of examining can and should be greatly improved. Their data should be used to test the effectiveness of the syllabus itself and also the adequacy of the tests as instruments of measurement, as well as the success of teacher and pupil.

E. W. MENZEL

THE TEACHING OF READING

Diagnostic testing and remedial teaching

PERHAPS no other skill enters into the learning process so much as reading. The days when the pupil was merely required to pronounce glibly from the printed page are now past. With the shift in emphasis from textbooks to source books in the content subjects such as social studies, reading skill has become more important than it ever was. Life situations in the present-day world require a skilful comprehension of the printed page, involving memory and organization of the material read. The pupil, in addition to merely passing the examinations, is expected to acquire the ability to read for information and pleasure. The ability to comprehend reference material, the ability to skim for facts, the ability to locate particular information, etc., are essential for anyone wishing to pursue higher studies. More often than not, want of achievement can be traced to poor reading habits.

Reading is a highly complex and composite skill, composed of various specific skills. Oral reading involves the basic ability to recognize a word independently by its configuration, context, syllabication and sound-blending. The advanced reader has to acquire such skills as the ability to recognize word meanings; the ability to comprehend sentence meanings; the ability to read rapidly at a clear level of comprehension; the ability to modify reading rate according to the content read (it may be critical study, recreation or skimming for facts); paragraph sense and the ability to locate information from books, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, etc. (using table of contents, indexes).

Remedial teaching should be consciously aimed at improving these various definite skills. Teachers can easily recognize a poor reader, but unless they have a clear knowledge of the particular skills in which he is deficient, they cannot do much to improve his level of reading. This renders measurement in 'reading' essential for the efficient organization of classroom teaching and remedial instruction.

The various factors which cause a retardation in reading can be considered briefly before the question of measurement is taken up. Physiological conditions such as poor health, defective vision or hearing, result in a low reading level. In addition, poor health causes frequent absences from school, and absences in the primary grade are much more serious in their consequences than at later stages, as each class missed means that the child has lost some new words introduced to the class, before he has had a chance to acquire a sound, basic vocabulary. This makes it difficult for him to follow subsequent lessons, and frustration at being unable to comprehend clearly makes him all the more a poor reader. Parents are apt to think nothing of the absences from school of a primary grade pupil, while emphasizing the regular attendance of older pupils.

At present the health conditions of the pupil are beyond the control

of the teacher, but any defects detected during the school medical examination can be reported to the parents who should be persuaded to take measures to remedy them promptly. The teacher can help poor hearers and short-sighted pupils, by making them sit in the front of the class.

Very often poor reading is due to the fact that the child was taught to read without considering the 'Reading Readiness' factor. Some children come from homes which have provided rich experiences for them, and they have seen, heard and talked a lot more than others. Such children are ready to read at an earlier age than children for whom such experiences have been lacking. Before beginning formal instruction in reading, it is therefore necessary to provide rich experiences for the children in school, by games, simple dramatizations, narration of stories, encouragement of oral expression of their experiences, etc., so that the less fortunate children will not be at a disadvantage when they start to read. The same is all the more true while introducing a foreign language such as English, as some children come from homes where English is more or less habitually spoken while others have not heard the language at all.

Sometimes organic conditions, though they are not defects by themselves, are responsible for poor reading. Left-handed people are often found to be also left-eyed, i.e. they tend to read the printed page from right to left. Such pupils have the tendency to read words in the reverse order, like 'was' for 'saw', 'no' for 'on' etc. Left-handedness can be identified by asking the children to perform a few simple actions like picking up a ball, collecting scattered things and observing the hand they tend to use dominantly. Tests have been devised to detect left-eyedness, but a simple method is to ask the children to read a list of words like pot, saw, etc., which make sense when read either way, and noting any reversal responses made. This condition however is not a defect, and such children improve in their reading by more practice. They have difficulty in writing with the right hand, and should be allowed to write with their left hand, as frustration in attempts to write interfere with their progress in reading.

Poor reading is often caused by failure to master the essential techniques involved in reading, and this can be remedied by diagnosing the specific weaknesses and organizing suitable remedial instruction carefully. Mass teaching is perhaps responsible for much of the difficulty in reading since it is aimed at a uniform level for all pupils while they learn at different levels. In the present set-up of education mass teaching is inevitable, but can prove efficient if individual difficulties are diagnosed and rectified by sound remedial instruction.

In the more advanced countries such as the United States and Canada, the teacher's work is facilitated by standardized achievement tests for purposes of diagnosis. The scores made in the tests can be commuted into grade and age scores, i.e. they indicate the grade level and age level at which the pupil is reading. His

percentile ranking with reference to the school population of his grade can also be found. For example, a pupil making a median score of 162 in the Iowa Silent Reading Test (Elementary) is studying at the grade level 8.5 (in other words at the level of an average pupil at five months beyond the eighth grade or in the sixth month of the ninth grade) and age level 14 (at the level of an average 14-year-old). His percentile ranking in grade 9 would be 45, i.e. 44 per cent of the school population in his grade read at a level below his. These equivalents are supplied in the form of a table to which ready reference can be made. The test also contains sub-tests for various skills such as reading rate, comprehension, directed reading, word meaning, sentence meaning, paragraph comprehension, location of information. The sub-test scores can be similarly commuted into age and grade equivalents. The results of the test give a clear overall picture of the various reading abilities of the student and reveal his specific strengths and weaknesses. A graph plotted with the various sub-test scores is very helpful.

The Iowa Reading Test is just one of the battery of good tests that have been constructed. The Oral Reading Test can be given either in place of or to supplement the Silent Reading Test and is particularly useful in the earlier grades. In this test, the examiner keeps a record of the pupil's hesitations, mispronunciations, full or partial omissions of a word, substitution of one word for another, insertion of words not in the text and repetitions. A summary of observations is also recorded. The complete report reveals the various characteristics of the pupil's performance.

The Reading Tests are supplemented by Spelling Tests which have also been standardized with respect to grade and age. Some tests just contain a list of words graded with regard to difficulty. In others, the pupils are given sheets containing sentences with a missing word in each. The examiner then reads aloud the whole sentence and the pupil writes down the missing word. This prevents confusion by words with similar sounds by enabling the pupil to make use of context clues. A spelling test reveals clearly the mode of attack used by the pupil—whether he uses syllabication or writes letter by letter. The examiner checks for the following defects in the printed check-list: spells letter by letter—no syllabication; spells too hurriedly; spells too slowly; spells phonetically—apparently recalls appearance of word poorly; lacks ability to spell phonetically—gives letters with incorrect sounds; tends to omit parts of words; tends to add letters and syllables and tends to transpose letters and syllables.

In many ways, the spelling lesson, which should be aimed at correcting the defects listed above, provides a more natural opportunity for training in word study than reading. Interruptions for correction while reading tend to distract and discourage the reader, while they are not serious while spelling. In some cases weakness in spelling may be responsible for weakness in the reading programme. Familiarity with

words and characteristics is increased by writing, and the spelling lesson may have a salutary effect on the reading ability. The following is the technique suggested by Gates for remedial work in spelling:

Directions to the pupil

1. Look at the word carefully and say it softly to yourself. If it has more than one part, say it again, part by part, looking at each part.
2. Look at the letters and say them. If the word has more than one part, say the letters part by part.
3. Write the word without looking at your book.
4. Look at your book and see if you spelled the word right. If you did, write it again and look at the book again. Do this once more.
5. If you did not spell the word right, see what letters you missed. Go through steps one and two again until you have written the word right three times without missing.

This simple technique will be found suitable for spelling improvement classes.

Reading Readiness Tests are useful in determining whether or not a child is as yet ready to start learning to read. These tests aim at an appraisal of the important pre-requisites of learning to read. Some of them are listed below:

(1) Adjustment to the school situation.
(2) Ability to use classroom equipment.
(3) Background of experience and information.
(4) Ability to name and recognize common colours.
(5) Ability to listen to and understand instructions and directions.
(6) The story sense.
(7) Ability to see and interpret pictures.
(8) Interest in printed words and connected material.

It would be worthwhile to consider these factors before introducing formal instruction in reading and writing, specially when the language happens to be a foreign language like English. Much of the difficulty faced by pupils in mastering a foreign language like English can be overcome by paying sufficient attention to practice in oral expression of the types mentioned above before introducing the written word.

Remedial work in oral reading consists primarily in teaching the methods of word attack—the ability to recognize and read words by their configuration, context clues, syllabication and sound-blending. Exercises in oral reading can be easily selected by the teacher from the textbook used and should be aimed at improving word recognition, sense of punctuation, pronunciation, enunciation, etc. Voice control indicates whether a pupil reads for meaning or whether reading is merely an artificial calling of sounds. Sound-blending can be taught by using lists of words which have similar blends, e.g. sat, cat, rat, bag,

mad, jam, and then going on to more complex words such as make, spade, space, blade. Multisyllable words such as classroom, textbook, newspaper, playground; underline, etc., should be attacked by splitting the words into syllables and reading.

Success in reading involves the ability to read phrase by phrase. The Eye-Voice span should be increased, i.e. the eyes should be reading ahead of the voice. This requires practice and is helped by conscious orientation. What the pupil has read orally under teacher supervision, he may be encouraged to reread silently by himself. This improves efficiency both in oral and silent reading. Oral reading by a group (in other words, choral reading) of interesting poems and passages is an activity very much enjoyed by the children. Dramatisations which involve the ability to learn by heart and repeat orally, are not only greatly enjoyed by the children, but also have a very good effect on their reading abilities.

Remedial instruction in silent reading, specially in the higher grades, should be aimed at improving the specific skills involved in the process. Workbooks, with standardized exercises, have been constructed for the purpose. *Reading for Meaning* (Longmans, Green and Company) is one such series in which the exercises are graded. The pupil in need of improving his reading is asked to read a particular unit for a specified time. (However, in the beginning the emphasis should be on comprehension rather than speed, and no time limit is necessary.) He then writes down the answers to a number of questions of a varied type based on the passage. His score in the exercise gives the grade level at which he is reading. The correct answers are then discussed by the teacher and the errors are pointed out. A chart of progress is made as he finishes each unit, which shows the improvement made. As the questions test different abilities such as understanding word-meanings, comprehending the main idea, making an outline, drawing conclusions, paragraph comprehension, etc., each exercise completed gives the pupil definite training in the various skills.

In the Glebe Collegiate of Ottawa, about 35 students were found to be reading at a level below their grade on the basis of the results of the Iowa Silent Reading Tests. They were grouped together for instructional purposes in a remedial class. The average grade score for every ten units was calculated and charted. Below is shown the progress made by a few cases as examples:

AVERAGE GRADE SCORE FOR

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Case 1	7.6	8.9	8.9	9.8	10.7	10.9
Case 2	7.5	8.6	8.7	9.2	9.8	10.0
Case 3	4.8	6.0	6.5	6.6	8.3	9.0

It can be clearly seen that the remedial instruction proved effective in raising the standard of reading. Of course, there were differences in the progress made according to the capacities of different pupils to profit by remedial instruction. At the end of the school year, another form of the Iowa Test used in the beginning was given. The scores made by a few cases in terms of their grade equivalents, before and after remedial instruction, are given below:

	Grade score in September	Grade score in May	Progress in grades
	(Before remedial inst.)	(After rem. inst.)	
A	7.9	11.0	3.1
B	7.7	10.3	2.6
C	4.9	6.4	1.5

An average progress of more than two grades was made by the group as a whole. The figures speak for themselves about the value of remedial instruction.

The achievement tests and the workbooks referred to have been framed and standardized with respect to the school population of the country (the United States) where they have been constructed. The norms supplied by the tests may not therefore be applicable to India where no such tests have as yet been standardized. But the essential principle underlying these tests can be well made use of by the teacher who can frame his own tests for diagnostic purposes after a study of the various skills aimed to be measured by these tests. The tests framed by the teacher, though they may not give exact grade norms, etc., should prove quite adequate for classroom purposes, if carefully framed. Regular instruction can be so modified that there is scope for training the pupils in the various specific skills by exercises planned for the purpose. The so-called composition classes can be so planned that the essay type of assignment is alternated with exercises of the type used in the tests and workbooks referred to. Students lagging behind the class in their reading abilities can be grouped together and given more intensive training in using the various skills.

The material used for remedial instruction should be of the same type as that used for classroom instruction. The teacher can prepare a set of suitable exercises graded with regard to difficulty. They should be interesting and popular, and neither so easy as to fail to challenge the pupil nor so difficult as to discourage him, and should be of varied types. The instruction should be frequent enough to have perceptible effects, but should not be substituted for other pleasurable activities such as games. A generous time allowance for improvement should be made. Every success should be emphasized as this spurs the pupil on to further effort. Errors should be pointed out and corrected without discouragement.

Recreational reading goes a long way to improve reading ability, but the retarded pupil may not take kindly to it if the books provided for the purpose do not meet him at his level of reading and interest. The school library should be equipped with books that will meet the varying needs of the pupils according to age, interest and ability. The teacher can offer skilful guidance to the pupil in his choice of books to read. Even the retarded reader who is loth to read anything 'extra', can be made to develop an interest in reading by such guidance. Terman, in his book *Children's Reading*, gives valuable suggestions as to how to create a taste for, and a habit of, reading for pleasure.

There is a cry about the standard of English going down in our schools. Every teacher is conscious of the need for raising the standard, but seems uncertain how to set about it. Whatever remedial instruction is offered is not organized along sound lines with a scientific knowledge of the principles involved, and is often merely a poor attempt to improve grammar which is believed to be at the base of everything. Wrong techniques used in the early stages set in motion a vicious circle and the high school teacher is perplexed at his pupil's inadequate mastery of reading, and the college professor despairs of his students' inability to make adequate use of reference material or to organize his ideas on a sound basis. Classroom instruction and remedial techniques, if organized with a view to develop reading by conscious orientation towards desirable goals, can go a long way to raise the standard of instruction.

SUB-TESTS OF THE IOWA READING TEST

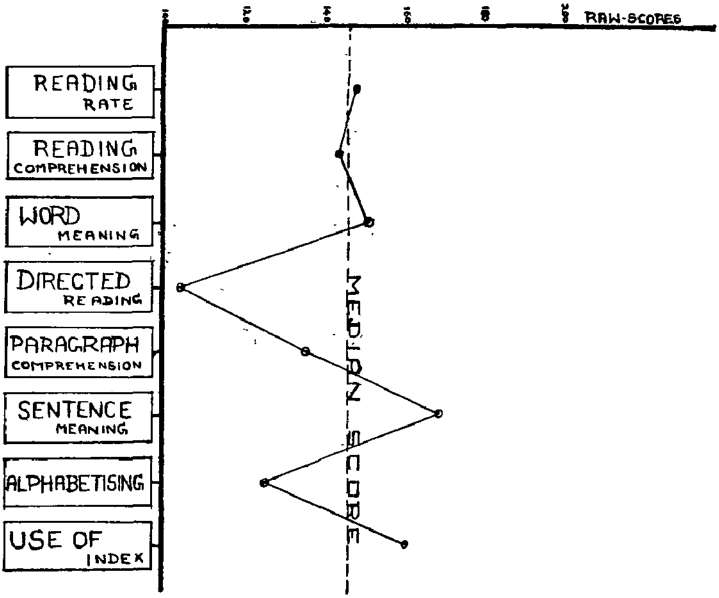

TABLE SHOWING THE SCORES IN THE SUB-TESTS OF THE IOWA READING TEST

	Raw score	Grade equivalent
1. Reading Rate	149	6.6
2. Reading Comprehension	144	6.0
3. Word Meaning	152	7.0
4. Directed Reading	105	1.5
5. Paragraph Comprehension	136	5.1
6. Sentence Meaning	170	9.5
7. Alphabetising	126	3.1
8. Use of Index	161	8.1
9. Median Score	147	6.4

Remarks: The pupil is in Grade 9 and his reading abilities are obviously below the mark, his median grade equivalent being only 6.4. He is particularly deficient in Directed Reading and Paragraph Comprehension. He is retarded by two grades in his general reading ability and needs remedial instruction to pull him up to the grade in which he is studying.

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2. *Handbook for Remedial Reading,* by William Kottmeyer, Director, Reading Clinic, St Louis Public Schools (Webster Publishing Company, St Louis, U.S.A.).

3. *The Improvement of Reading:* A programme of Diagnostic and Remedial Methods, by A. I. Gates, Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York.

TEST MATERIAL

1. *Iowa Silent Reading Tests* (World Book Co., New York).
2. *Gates' Reading Tests* (Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, New York).
3. *Dominion Group Achievement Tests* (Dept. of Educational Research, University of Toronto, Toronto).
4. *Stanford Achievement Tests* (University of Stanford).

WORKBOOKS

1. *Standard Test Lessons in Reading Series,* by McCall and Crabbs (Bureau of Publications, Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York).
2. *Reading for Meaning,* by Guiler and Coleman (Longmans, Green & Co.).

NOTE. The writer's thanks are due to the following persons for their help and guidance.

1. Mr E. M. Elliot, Guidance Director, Glebe Collegiate, Ottawa, Canada.
2. Professor R. Ramanujachariar, Head of the Department of Education, Annamalai University.

C. M. Bhatia: *Performance Tests of Intelligence under Indian Conditions* (Oxford University Press, 1955), Demy 8vo, pp. xii + 132, Rs 10.

A foreword by Godfrey H. Thomson, one of the leading psychologists and statisticians in the field, is in itself a guarantee that the testing procedure is sound and properly verified by statistical analysis. And so it happens to be. The book presents a capable and thorough piece of work.

The experiment was confined to boys between the ages of eleven and sixteen in Uttar Pradesh. In this respect the experiment is unique because we have no other good comparison of literates and illiterates in the ages where the differences are most telling. As expected, the performance of illiterates is so much behind that of the literates, that the same norms cannot be applied to both. This has been suspected a long time by certain users of group intelligence tests, but since group intelligence tests are very difficult to use amongst illiterates, a reliable measurement could not be made. Incidentally, the Passalong Test was the only one of the five in the battery in which illiterates could compete with the literates. The average raw score of the sixteen-year-old illiterates on the complete battery is not even quite up to the level of the eleven-year-old literates. The experimenter suggests that a different set of norms is necessary for each. He could have pointed out that we face an even greater difficulty. Since there are many degrees of literacy all the way from near-illiteracy to a substantial degree of scholastic maturity, we need not only two sets of norms, but perhaps several, which means that it is almost impossible to standardize an intelligence test without paying regard to educational development. Environmental differences other than schooling also make a difference. Sex differences also need to be compensated for. Sex differences are not treated by the experimenter as he did not test girls. But he did note significant differences in the performance of boys from urban and rural environments which agree generally with findings elsewhere. While we are on the subject of group differences we must mention that backward community groups were slightly but not significantly inferior to Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. Thus, there are two items of special interest in this experiment: the confirmation that illiterates are at a disadvantage in individual non-verbal tests (as much as in verbal tests, which is self-evident) and a suggestion that the disadvantage which the underprivileged suffer arises from environment rather than native differences.

Brief allusion is made to several other experiments in India with individual performance tests, although not all of these are included. There is no reference to experiments with group tests which are, and will continue to be, in much greater use. Though not as accurate as the individual tests, group tests can still be very useful when used among school-children. From reading the book, one would not even suspect that there happens to be such an instrument as a group intelligence test or that anything has been done in this country in intelligence testing besides four standardizations of individual tests.

The book grows entirely out of the English school of intelligence testing with almost no reference to anything that has been done by other than Englishmen and Indians, but this does not vitiate the value of what was done in this restricted field, for the British school is thorough, and second to none when it comes to sound statistical treatment.

As in the case of all intelligence tests in India, the validation is quite skimpy. In the case of the illiterates it is almost negligible. But what criteria are there for comparison?

We repeat that the experimenter has done a good job and the test should prove useful to those trained to use and interpret such tests.

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J. E. Jayasuriya: *Statistical Calculations for Teachers* (Macmillan & Co. Ltd), Demy 8vo, pp. 100, Rs 3-8.

The non-mathematical teacher is sometimes frightened by the word 'statistics' and the idea that he might be expected to apply statistical procedures to the marks he gives to his pupil's work fills him with dismay. This is just the book for such a

teacher. If he will pluck up the courage to study this book he will find that under the gentle guidance of Mr Jayasuriya the mysteries of statistics are made clear and their terrors removed. Moreover Mr Jayasuriya makes perfectly clear the value of such devices as scaling marks given in different subjects or by different teachers, and shows the injustice of adding raw scores to decide the first in rank or the prize winner. This book covers all the statistical procedures likely to be needed by the teacher in simple clear language with all the technical terms clearly explained. Exercises (but not the answers) are provided for each chapter. A useful little book.

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E. PRIESTLEY and J. GRAYSON: *My Music Guide*, Bk. III (Thomas Nelson & Sons), 9½″ × 7¼″, pp. vi + 48, 2*s*. 6*d*.

The joint authors of the series *My Music Guide* have brought out yet another book of immense value to teachers and pupils. This series helps to guide pupils into channels of fundamentals in music-making.

Written simply and clearly, the authors, who are advisers in Music to educational authorities in England, have applied themselves to those practical points at which most pupils require special help. For instance, relative pitch, memory training, rhythmic perception and—a special difficulty—the setting of words to rhythms. This book includes a number of illustrative problems and information regarding composers and their well-loved concert pieces—opening up a world of music hitherto unexplored by the young mind.

An interesting feature of this book is the inclusion of sections dealing with the wood-wind instruments of the orchestra, lists of instrumental concert pieces, and short talks illustrated with lists of gramophone records. Emphasis is laid on the introduction of new rhythms, wider intervals, and a list of useful Italian tunes. Following up the plan of familiarizing the young student with great masters in the earlier volumes (ranging from Purcell to Schubert) they have added four more of the Romantic school.

Today's child is tomorrow's author, composer, playwright and musician! In a nation's educational scheme children's books play a vital role, and any series of books of this type at the disposal of the teacher is of invaluable help indeed. But it does leave one with a slight sense of regret in that it does not touch upon any aspect of voice culture or the mechanics of singing. Although this book is essentially for class teaching, the sketches and illustrations are likely to stir the interest and imagination of any young pupil.

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Britain: An Official Handbook, 1955 edition (U.K. Central Office of Information), 9¼″ × 6″, pp. 438, 32 photographs, end-map. Cloth, Rs 7-8; Paper covers, Rs 4-8.

This compendium of information on the basic facts about Britain, its people and its institutions is designed to supply the answers to questions most frequently asked about Britain by writers and teachers, students, businessmen and officials in other countries. Separate chapters deal with Government and Administration, Defence, the National Economy, Industry, Transport and Communications, Labour and Management, Finance, Trade, Social Welfare, Housing and Planning, Religion, Science, the Arts, the Press, and Sound and Television Broadcasting.

Teachers will first wish to refer to the seven pages on education. Some will derive inspiration from the facts that over 90 per cent of school-children in Britain attend state or state-aided schools and that in these schools there is one full-time teacher for every 27 pupils. Others will remain merely depressed. They should nevertheless keep this volume on their shelves: it is not expensive. The photographs are good and there is a comprehensive bibliography.

Copies may be obtained from British Information Services, Eastern House, Mansingh Road, New Delhi. The price does not include postage.

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